

Oasis Youth Residential Service

1978 –

Other Names: • LASA Youth Centre

Details

The Oasis Youth Residential Service was established in 1978. It was originally known as the LASA Youth Refuge, a joint project of the Salvation Army and the Weston Creek Lions Club (LASA stood for Lions and Salvation Army). Its first location was in Kingston, and around 1986 the refuge moved to Waramanga. In the 2000s the service became known as the Oasis Youth Residential Service. Oasis provides crisis and short-term accommodation for young people aged between 15 and 21.

The Oasis Youth Residential Service began as a refuge in Kingston called the LASA Youth Refuge. LASA Youth Refuge was a joint project of the Salvation Army and the Weston Creek Lions Club.

The refuge in Kingston officially opened in April 1978. It averaged 9 guests a day. In 1978, the refuge was run by Salvation Army couple Harold and Connie Lesar (known as 'Ma and Pa' to residents according to the *Canberra Times*). LASA Youth Refuge was established 'because the Commissioner for Police was unhappy about having nowhere to put children on remand other than a prison-style environment' (*Canberra Times*, August 1978).

In 1992, an article stated that the LASA Youth Centre was located in Waramanga. Jointly run by the Salvos and the Lions Club, LASA also received funding from the federal and ACT governments. There was no charge to residents at LASA unless they were earning an income, in which case they paid 25% of their income. The article stated that the average length of stay was 4 weeks, but in some circumstances an extension could be arranged (*Canberra Times* 21 May 1992).

By 2002, the LASA Youth Centre was being referred to as part of the Salvation Army's Oasis Network. The Oasis Youth Residential Service provides crisis and short-term accommodation for young people in the ACT.

In 2015 Oasis had 12 beds across two sites, for young people aged between 16 and 24 who are experiencing homelessness. It has previously provided services to young people aged between 15 and 21, and operated across up to four sites.

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